

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06

SAM-01 SAB-01 AID-05 /086 W
----- 020984

R 181341Z SEP 75

FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4622

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

USMISSION GENEVA

DIA WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L DAMASCUS 3652

GENEVA FOR MEPC DEL SAUNDERS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PFOR, SY, SU, US

SUBJECT: GLIMPSES INTO STUDENT AND MILITARY REACTION TO SINAI
AGREEMENT

1. IN OUR EFFORTS TO MONITOR REACTIONS TO SINAI AGREEMENT WE HAVE
OBTAINED SOME GLIMPSES INTO THINKING OF SYRIAN MILITARY AND
STUDENTS. SYRIAN WITH EXCELLENT MILITARY CONNECTIONS TOLD US OF
TWO EXPERIENCES IN PAST WEEK. IN FIRST INSTANCE, WHILE VISITING
RELATIVE AT HOMES MILITARY ACADEMY HE MET COMMANDANT AND GROUP OF
OFFICERS STANDING WITH SOVIET MILITARY PERSONNEL. IN WHAT SOURCE
DESCRIBED AS CALCULATED ATTEMPT TO EMBARRASS SOVIETS PRESENT
COMMANDANT ASKED HIM IF HE KNEW WHEN KISSINGER WOULD BE RETURNING
TO SYRIA. FOLLOWING SOURCE'S NEGATIVE RESPONSE, COMMANDANT STATED,
"LET'S HOPE IT IS SOON."

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2. SOURCE TALKED WITH ANOTHER GROUP OF SYRIAN OFFICERS

SHORTLY AFTER THIS INCIDENT, AT FUNERAL OF SARG DEPMIN SUPPLY. OFFICERS TOLD HIM THAT BAATH PARTY LINE WAS "EMPTY TALK" WHICH HOPEFULLY HAD NOT PERSUADED ANYONE THAT SYRIA WOULD OPPOSE

FURTHER NEGOTIATIONS TO REACH PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT.

3. IN ADDITIONAL COMMENT, SOURCE SAID THAT HE UNDERSTOOD SADAT'S MOST RECENT SPEECH HAD CAUSED REAL STIR AMONG SYRIAN ARMED FORCES AS FRUSTRATED OVER RESTRICTIONS SOVIETS HAVE IMPOSED ON USE OF MILITARY EQUIPMENT THEY HAVE SUPPLIED, AND OPINED THAT SOME OFFICERS PROBABLY VIEWED NEGOTIATIONS AS

PROCESS WHICH WOULD ULTIMATELY ENABLE SARG TO EXPEL SOVIET MILITARY CONTINGENT. SADAT'S COMMENTS ON SOVIET-EGYPTIAN MILITARY RELATIONSHIP THUS STRUCK RESPONSIVE CHORD AMONG THESE DISSATISFIED OFFICERS.

4. SEPT. 16 EMBOFF SPOKE WITH AMERICAN WHO HERE STUDYING ARABIC FOR BUSINESS FIRM WHICH HOPES TO DO BUSINESS IN SYRIA. AMCIT REMARKED THAT HE VISITED DAMASCUS UNIVERSITY CAMPUS ALMOST

DAILY TO MEET STUDENTS PREPARING FOR AUTUMN SESSION IN EFFORT TO IMPROVE HIS ARABIC. HE VOLUNTEERED THAT MANY OF HIS FRIENDS ARE POLITICALLY APATHETIC, AND EVEN THOSE WHO BEGIN CONVERSATION ON POLITICAL NOTE SOON LAPSE INTO SUBJECTS OF "REAL" CONCERN, I.E., GIRLS AND FUTURE CAREER PROSPECTS. HE SAID THAT MOST OF THEM ARE SERIOUS IN THEIR DESIRE FOR PEACE, MAINLY AS RESULT OF THEIR AVERSION TO UNDERGOING PERIOD OF COMPULSORY SERVICE.

5. COMMENT. FACT THAT STUDENTS DISLIKE MILITARY SERVICE NOT STARTLING NEWS, AND NEITHER IS EXISTENCE OF RESENTMENT AMONG SYRIAN OFFICER CORPS TO SOVIET PRESENCE. BUT THEY ARE USEFUL REMINDERS THAT MANY SYRIANS, WHO UNDOUBTEDLY AGREE WITH OFFICIAL SARG EFFORTS TO BRING ABOUT COMPLETE ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL FROM OCCUPIED TERRITORIES, HAVE REASONS OF THEIR OWN FOR HOPING THAT SETTLEMENT CAN BE ACHIEVED BY PEACEFUL MEANS RATHER THAN THROUGH RESORT TO FORCE.
MURPHY

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